MARVEL
029
AARON
LARROCA
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STAR WARS

Book VI, Part IV

YODA'S SECRET WAR

It is a time of renewed hope for the Rebel Alliance as heroic rebel soldiers strive to overthrow Imperial efforts throughout the galaxy.

Luke is stranded in his X-wing when R2-D2 goes on a solo rescue mission for C-3PO. The rebel pilot has only the old journals of Ben Kenobi to turn to, and has been reading tales from the earlier days of Master Yoda.

After a daring rescue, Yoda feels a calling in the Force and follows it to a planet inhabited only by child warriors. Jealous of Yoda's abilities, they send him deep into the heart of a mountain to seek a mysterious power. It is in this mountain he stumbles upon another child, Garro, and together they make a frightening discovery. The mountain is alive....

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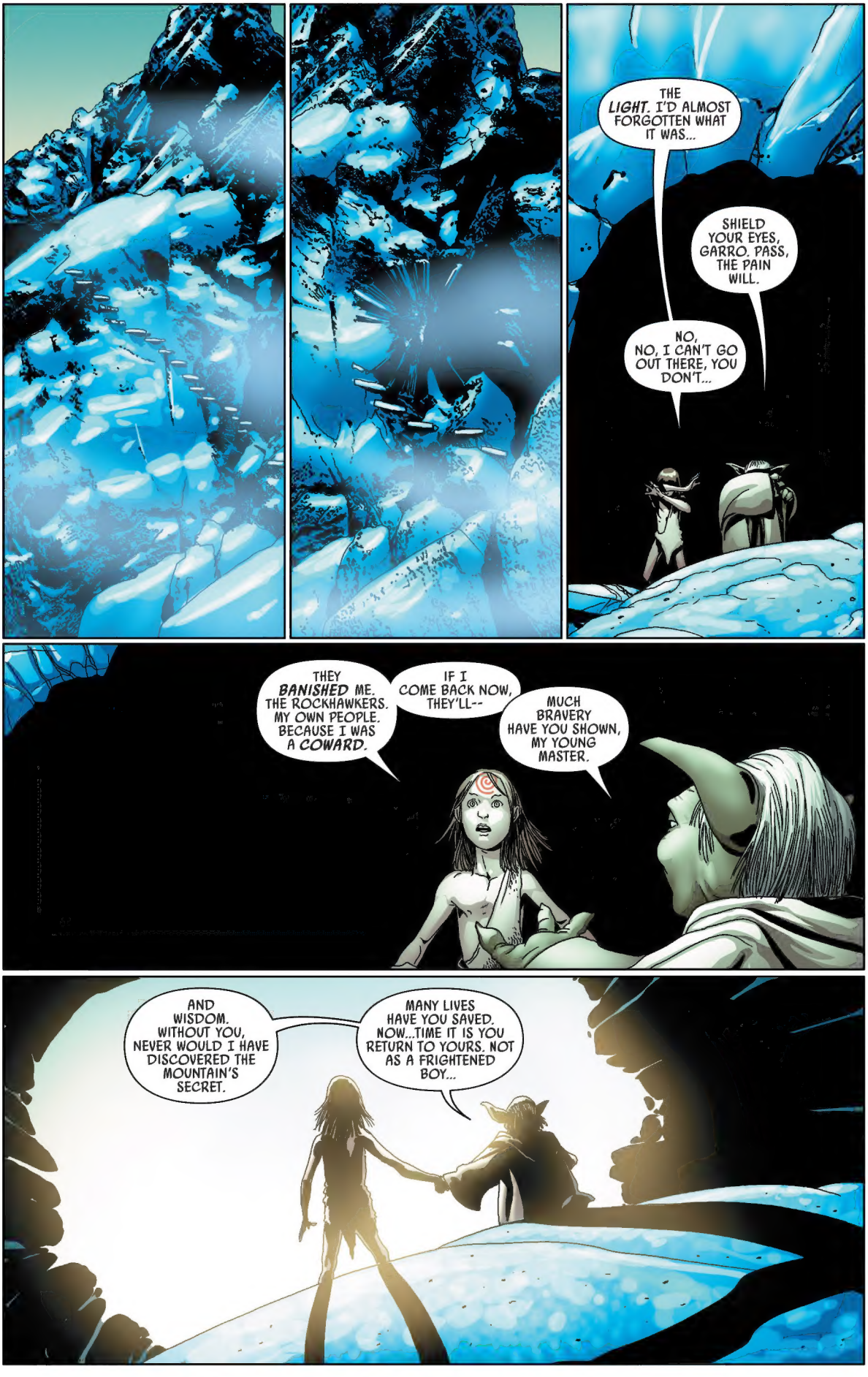
THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN. IT LOOKS LIKE...
...AN ACTUAL HEART. I CAN FEEL IT BEATING AS IF...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
MR. JEDI?
THE BLUE STONE. IT WASN'T JUST ALIVE IN THE FORCE.
IT WAS ALIVE.
THE STONES WEREN'T PIECES OF A MOUNTAIN, BUT OF A LIVING CREATURE.
A BARELY LIVING CREATURE.
IT MEANS... A LIFE TO SAVE, WE HAVE.

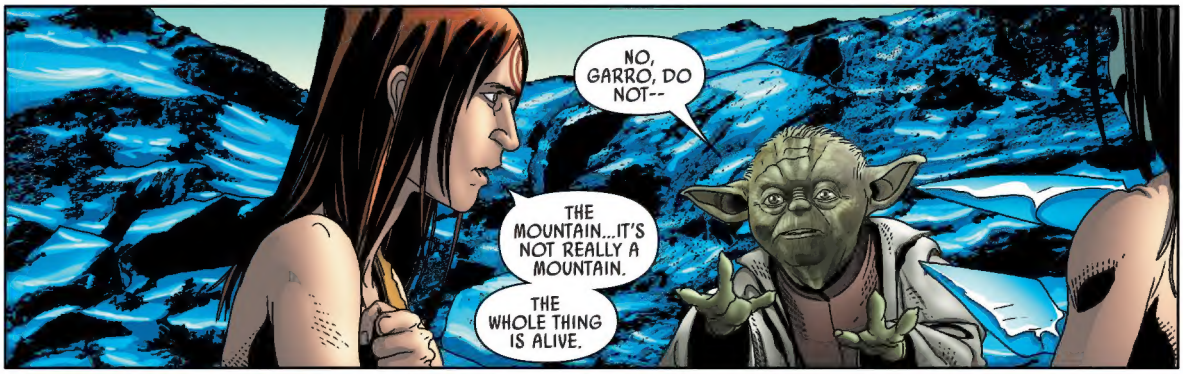
DAY AND NIGHT, THE JEDI MASTER MEDITATED AND COMMUNED WITH THE MOUNTAIN.
SHARING HIS LIFE FORCE WITH THE STONE AROUND HIM.
AFTER THREE DAYS, A WARM WIND BLEW THROUGH THE CAVES, AS ANCIENT, CAVERNOUS LUNGS BEGAN TO HEAVE AND WHEEZE.
AFTER FIVE DAYS, THEY COULD HEAR LAVA BUBBLING IN THE WALLS, LIKE HOT BLOOD PUMPING THROUGH ARTERIES.
AFTER NINE DAYS, THE JEDI MASTER FIRST HEARD THE VOICE.
IT WAS FAINT AT FIRST, LIKE A GRINDING OF PEBBLES DEEP BENEATH THE GROUND, BUT IT GREW LOUDER WITH EACH PASSING DAY.
THE PEBBLES BECAME HEAVY STONES, AND THEN BOULDERS, UNTIL THE WORDS CAME POURING OUT LIKE AN AVALANCHE.
AND ALL THE JEDI HAD TO DO WAS LISTEN.

NOT ALWAYS HAS IT SAT HERE LIKE A MOUNTAIN. WALK IT ONCE DID. AMONG ITS OWN KIND. GIANTS OF LIVING STONE.
THEIR WORLD THIS WAS. PROTECT IT AGAINST THE GREATEST OF THREATS THEY DID. UNTIL THE SMALLEST OF THREATS PROVED THEIR UNDOING.
PEOPLE. PEOPLE DROVE THE GIANTS TO THEIR KNEES. OUT OF FEAR. OUT OF GREED FOR POWER.
INTO THE EARTH THE GIANTS CRAWLED. MOUNTAINS THEY BECAME.
BUT STILL THE PEOPLE KNEW GREED AND BUTCHERED THE BODIES OF THE SLEEPING GIANTS. UNTIL ONLY ONE MOUNTAIN REMAINED.
AND NOW... THAT MOUNTAIN SLEEPS NO LONGER.
UM, RIGHT...
BY THAT YOU MEAN THE WALLS ARE SUDDENLY SPEWING LAVA. DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD MAYBE...
YES, YOUNG GARRO. *HUNGER* OUR NEW FRIEND DOES.
BUT NOT FOR US.

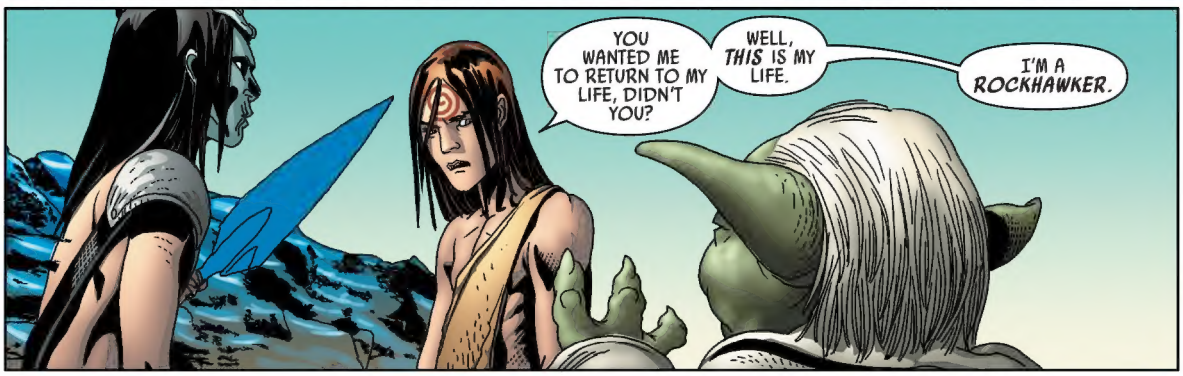

THE LIGHT. I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS...
SHIELD YOUR EYES, GARRO. PASS, THE PAIN WILL.
NO, NO, I CAN'T GO OUT THERE, YOU DON'T...
THEY BANISHED ME. THE ROCKHAWKERS. MY OWN PEOPLE. BECAUSE I WAS A COWARD.
IF I COME BACK NOW, THEY'LL--
MUCH BRAVERY HAVE YOU SHOWN, MY YOUNG MASTER.
AND WISDOM. WITHOUT YOU, NEVER WOULD I HAVE DISCOVERED THE MOUNTAIN'S SECRET.
MANY LIVES HAVE YOU SAVED. NOW...TIME IT IS YOU RETURN TO YOURS. NOT AS A FRIGHTENED BOY...

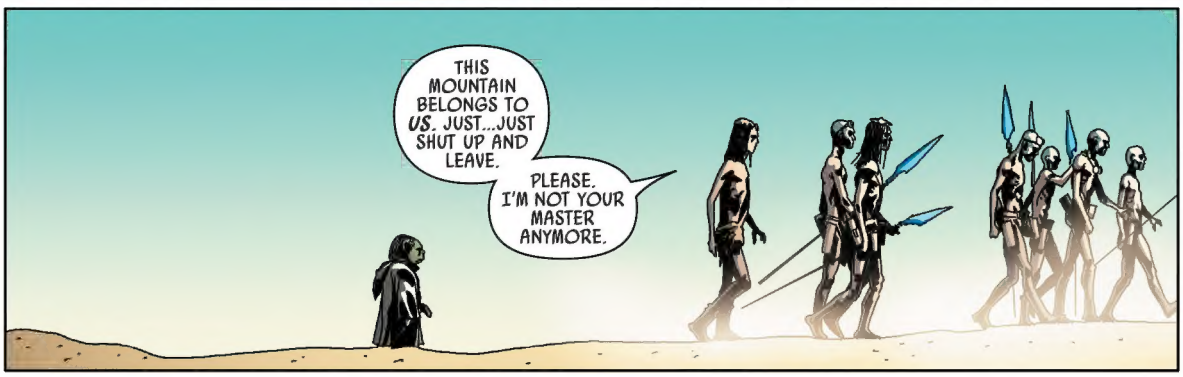
"...BUT AS A FREE MAN."
THEY RETURNED FROM THE CAVES?
BUT...NO ONE HAS EVER RETURNED FROM THE CAVES.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
IT MEANS HE FOUND IT.
DIDN'T YOU? YOU AND YOUR COWARDLY FRIEND HERE.
YOU FOUND THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN. YOU FOUND ITS SECRET.
SO GO AHEAD, YOU LITTLE FREAK. TELL US WHAT IT IS.
NO.

I DON'T THINK I HEARD YOU.
WORK, YOUR EARS DO. JUST NOT YOUR BRAIN.
NOT WORTHY OF THIS SECRET HAVE YOU SHOWN YOURSELVES.
AND YOU HAVEN'T SHOWN YOURSELF WORTHY OF *LIVING*, YOU UGLY RUNT.
YOU'VE GOT FIVE SECONDS TO DO SO.
MATTERS NOT DOES MY DEATH.
EITHER WAY, FINISHED THIS WAR IS.
ALL RIGHT, YOU HEARD THE FREAK.
FINISH IT.
UH, GUYS... IS...IS IT JUST ME...
...OR IS THE GROUND SUDDENLY *SHAKING?*
WAIT!
IT'S *ALIVE.*


NO, GARRO, DO NOT--
THE MOUNTAIN...IT'S NOT REALLY A MOUNTAIN.
THE WHOLE THING IS ALIVE.

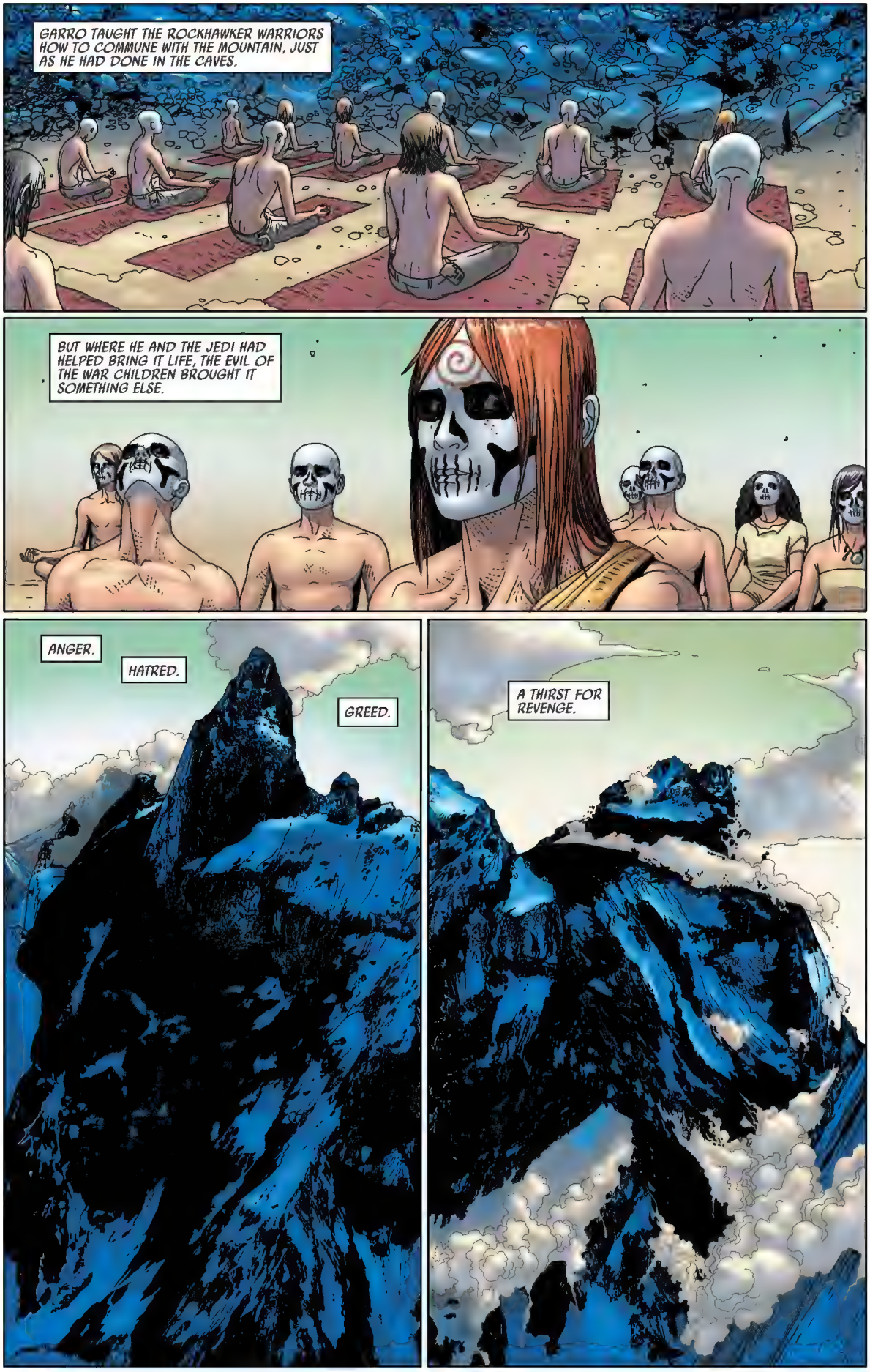
I HEARD ITS VOICE, JUST LIKE HE DID. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT IT SAID... IF YOU LET HIM GO.
NOT THE WAY THIS IS. NOT--

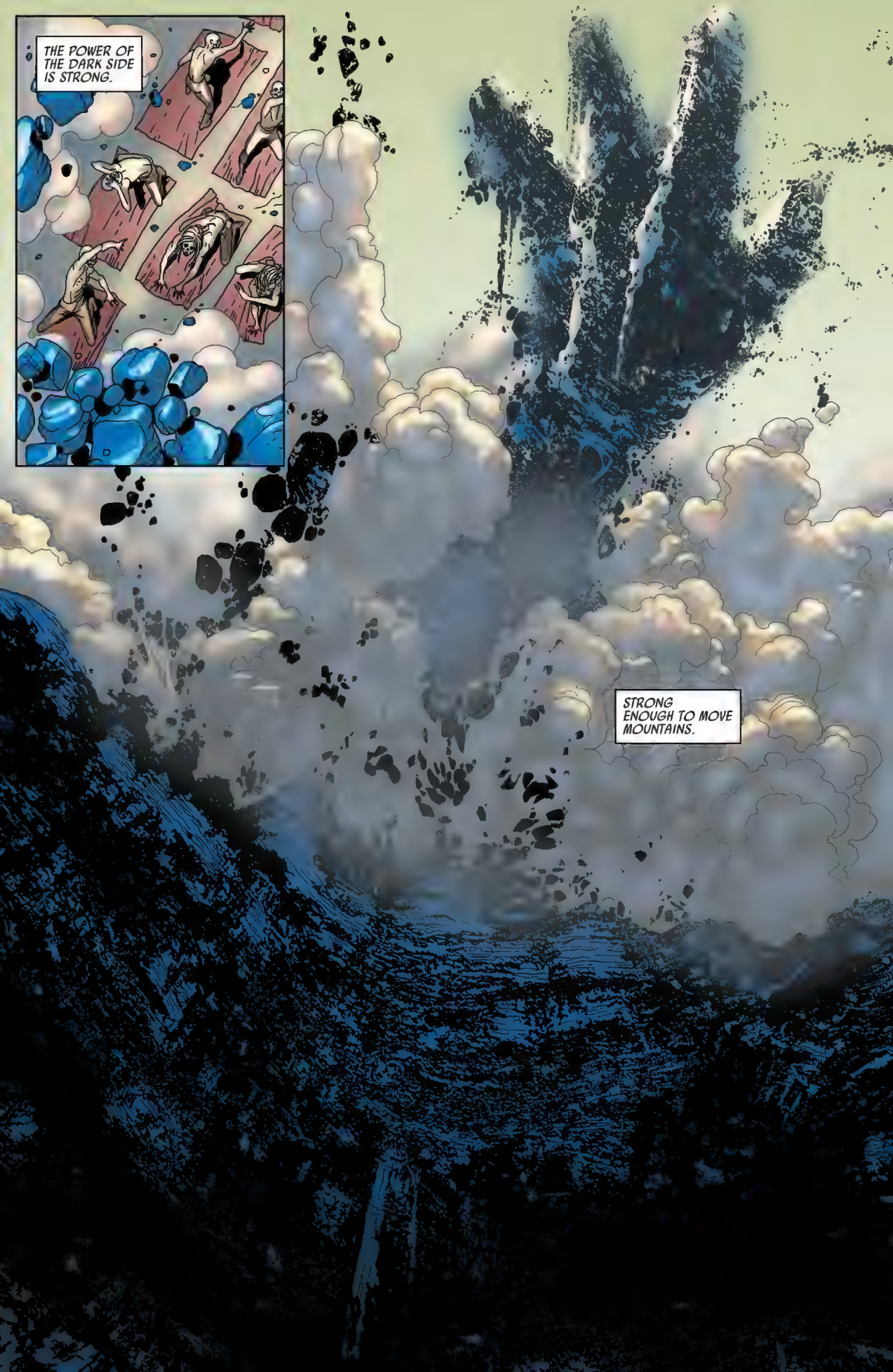

YOU WANTED ME TO RETURN TO MY LIFE, DIDN'T YOU?
WELL, THIS IS MY LIFE.
I'M A ROCKHAWKER.


THIS MOUNTAIN BELONGS TO US. JUST...JUST SHUT UP AND LEAVE.
PLEASE. I'M NOT YOUR MASTER ANYMORE.

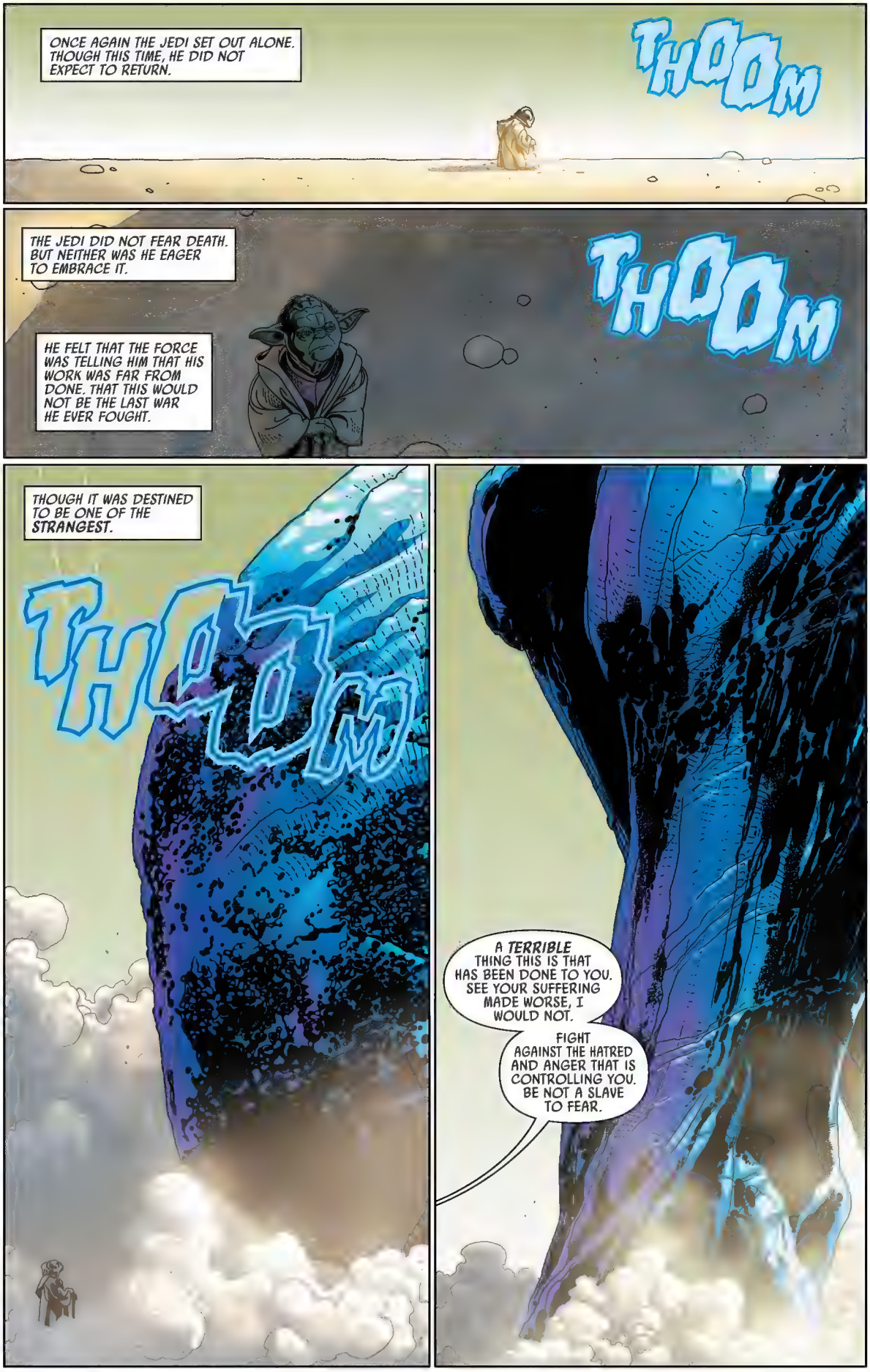
SO ENDS YOUR TRAINING.

HE'S BACK! THE DELIVERER!
YOU SAW THE ROCKHAWKERS?
DID YOU DEFEAT THEM?
ARE THEY ALL DEAD?
PREPARE WE MUST.
HUH? PREPARE FOR WHAT?
FOR WAR.
BUT WE'VE BEEN AT WAR. FOR YEARS.
NO. BEGIN NOW THE REAL WAR DOES.
A WAR UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN.

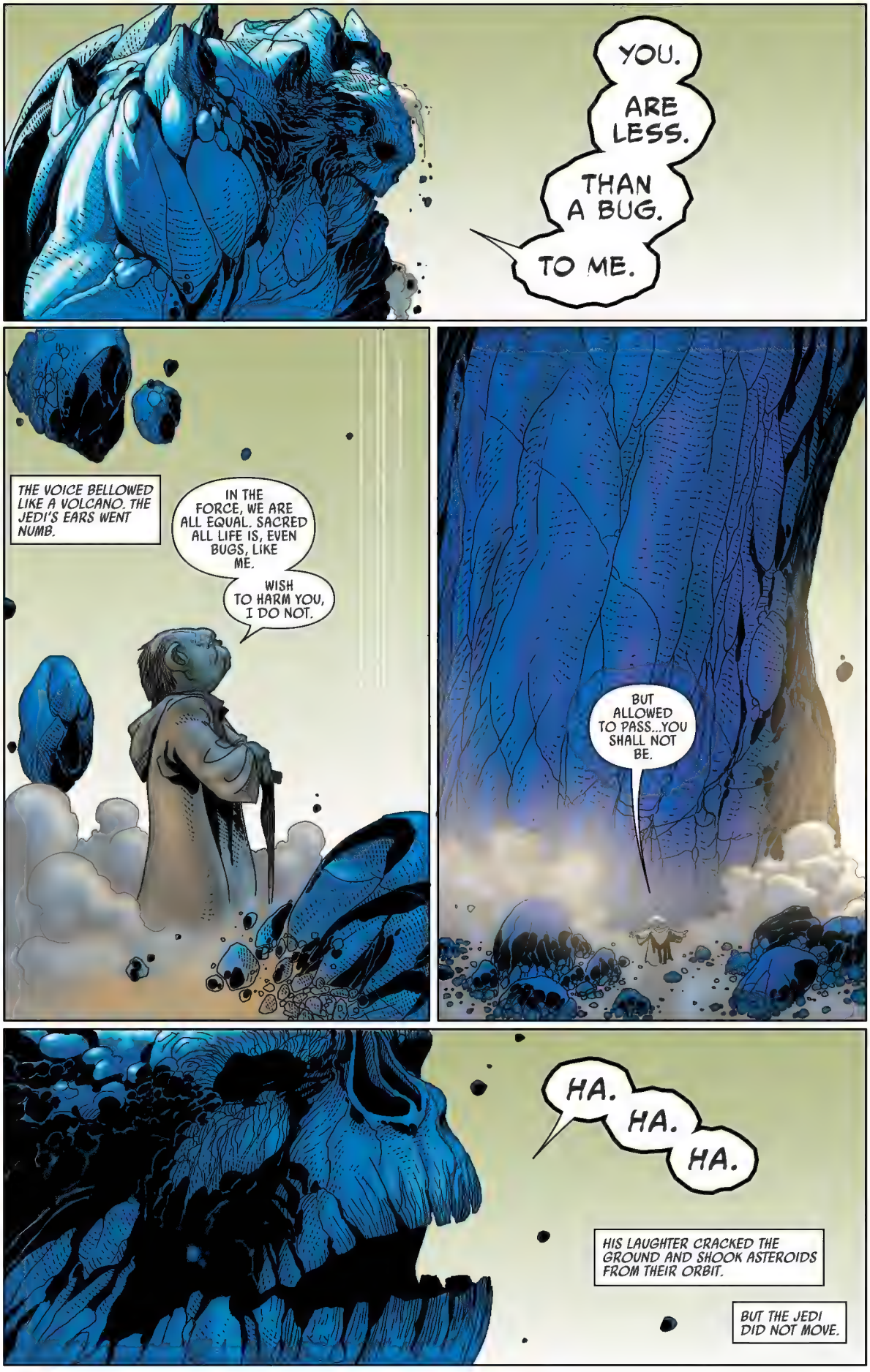

GARRO TAUGHT THE ROCKHAWKER WARRIORS HOW TO COMMUNE WITH THE MOUNTAIN, JUST AS HE HAD DONE IN THE CAVES.
BUT WHERE HE AND THE JEDI HAD HELPED BRING IT LIFE, THE EVIL OF THE WAR CHILDREN BROUGHT IT SOMETHING ELSE.
ANGER.
HATRED.
GREED.
A THIRST FOR REVENGE.

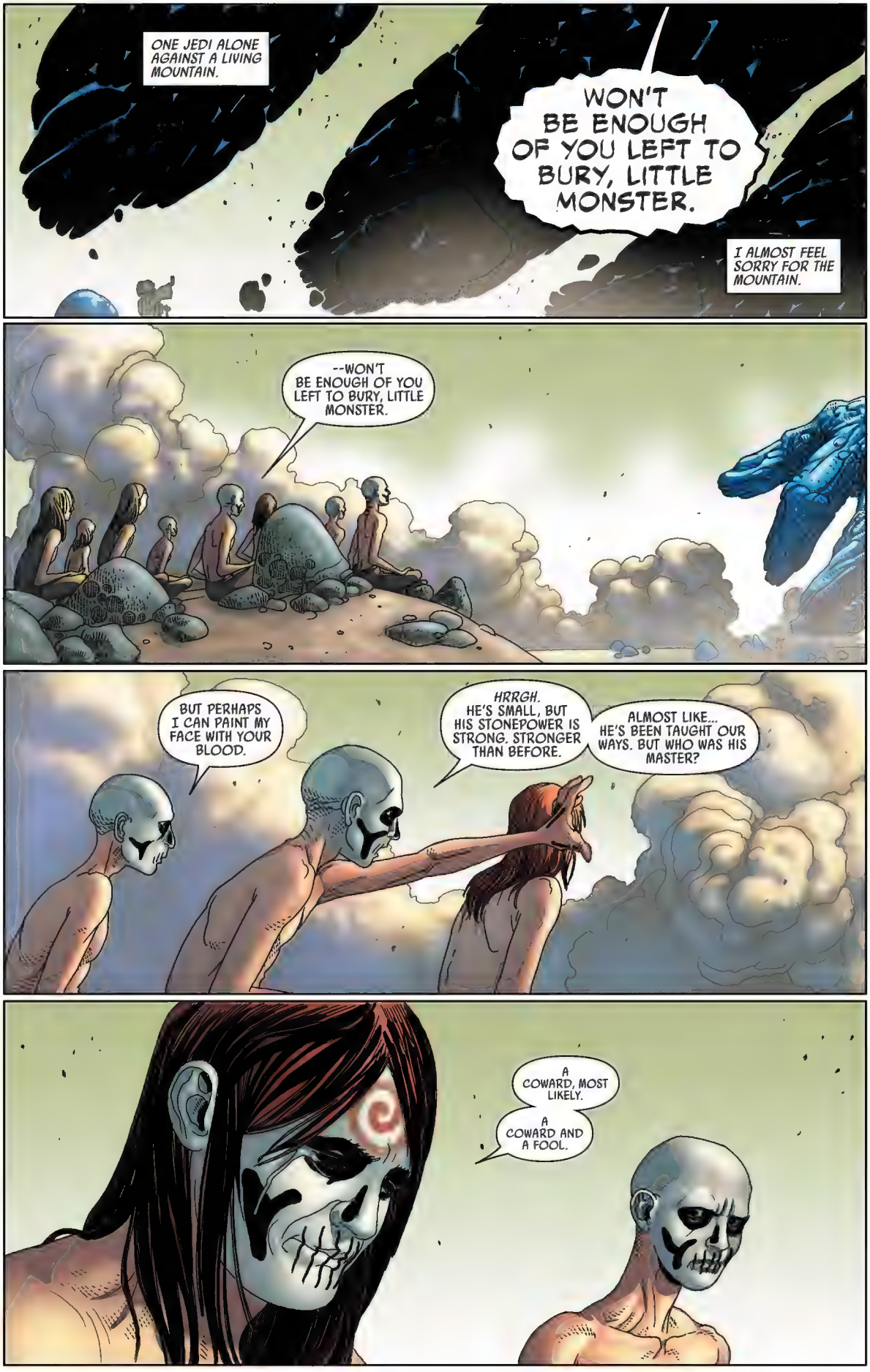

THE POWER OF THE DARK SIDE IS STRONG.
STRONG ENOUGH TO MOVE MOUNTAINS.

FEEL THE STONES, YOU MUST. FEEL THEM BREATHING.
FEEL THE STONEPOWER FLOWING THROUGH YOU.
REACH DEEP BENEATH THE GROUND.
NOT SO DEAD IS THIS WORLD. ONLY SLEEPING.
HELP IT WAKE WE MUST.
THOOM
HELP IT TO RISE.
THOOM
WHAT IS THAT SOUND? IT SHAKES MY BONES.
THE MOUNTAIN... LOOKS CLOSER THAN IT WAS BEFORE. WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO THE...
CONTINUE YOUR MEDITATION. HANDLE THIS ALONE I WILL.


ONCE AGAIN THE JEDI SET OUT ALONE. THOUGH THIS TIME, HE DID NOT EXPECT TO RETURN.
THOOM
THE JEDI DID NOT FEAR DEATH. BUT NEITHER WAS HE EAGER TO EMBRACE IT.
HE FELT THAT THE FORCE WAS TELLING HIM THAT HIS WORK WAS FAR FROM DONE. THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE THE LAST WAR HE EVER FOUGHT.
THOOM
THOUGH IT WAS DESTINED TO BE ONE OF THE STRANGEST.
THOOM
A TERRIBLE THING THIS IS THAT HAS BEEN DONE TO YOU. SEE YOUR SUFFERING MADE WORSE, I WOULD NOT.
FIGHT AGAINST THE HATRED AND ANGER THAT IS CONTROLLING YOU. BE NOT A SLAVE TO FEAR.

FEAR DOES NOT MAKE US STRONGER.
FEAR ONLY MAKES US *SMALL*.

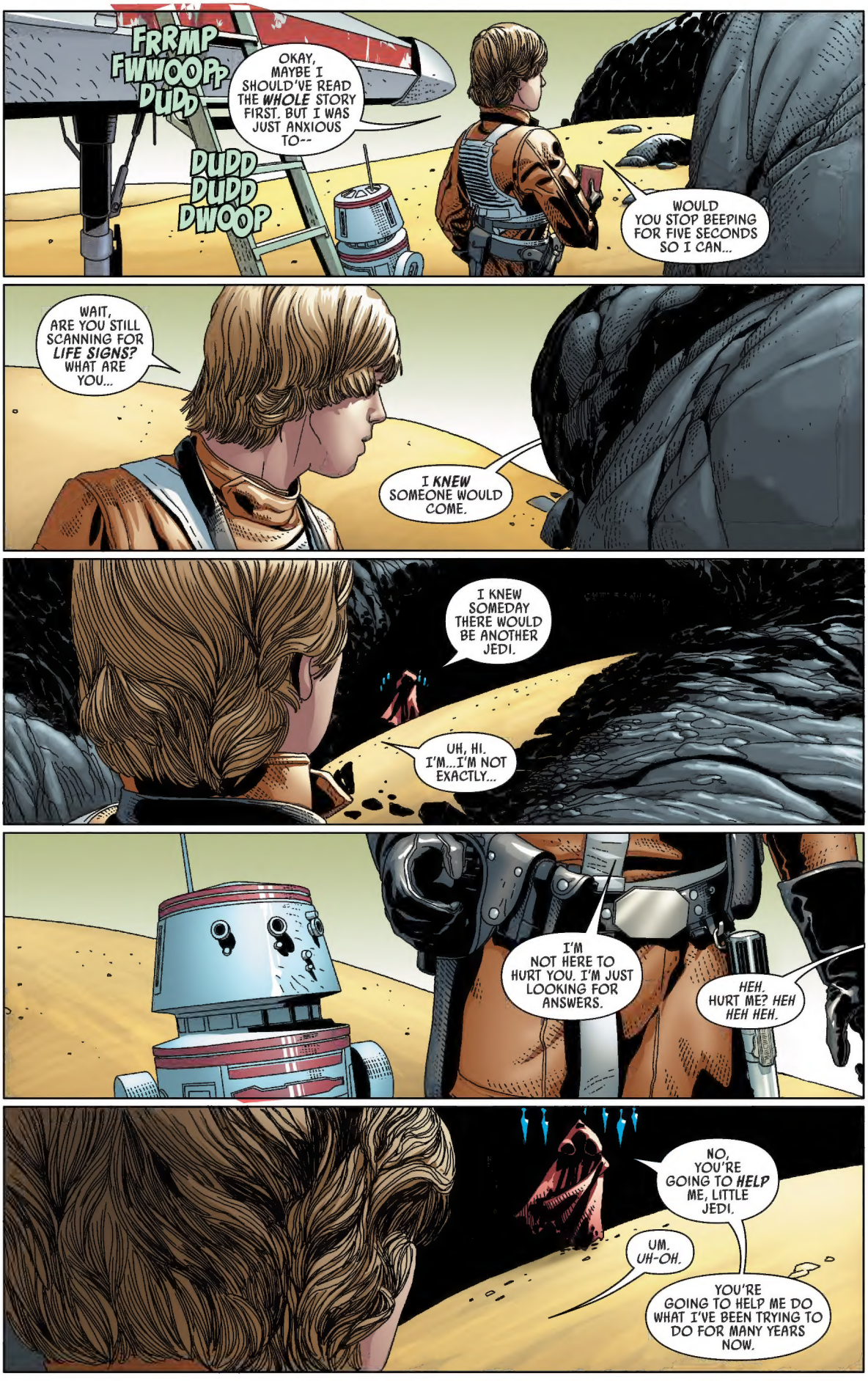

YOU.
ARE LESS.
THAN A BUG.
TO ME.
THE VOICE BELLOWED LIKE A VOLCANO. THE JEDI'S EARS WENT NUMB.
IN THE FORCE, WE ARE ALL EQUAL. SACRED ALL LIFE IS, EVEN BUGS, LIKE ME.
WISH TO HARM YOU, I DO NOT.
BUT ALLOWED TO PASS...YOU SHALL NOT BE.
HA. HA. HA.
HIS LAUGHTER CRACKED THE GROUND AND SHOOK ASTEROIDS FROM THEIR ORBIT.
BUT THE JEDI DID NOT MOVE.


ONE JEDI ALONE AGAINST A LIVING MOUNTAIN.
WON'T BE ENOUGH OF YOU LEFT TO BURY, LITTLE MONSTER.
I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR THE MOUNTAIN.
--WON'T BE ENOUGH OF YOU LEFT TO BURY, LITTLE MONSTER.
BUT PERHAPS I CAN PAINT MY FACE WITH YOUR BLOOD.
HRRGH. HE'S SMALL, BUT HIS STONEPOWER IS STRONG. STRONGER THAN BEFORE.
ALMOST LIKE... HE'S BEEN TAUGHT OUR WAYS. BUT WHO WAS HIS MASTER?
A COWARD, MOST LIKELY.
A COWARD AND A FOOL.

JUST LIKE I FIGURED. THE VAGADARR SYSTEM.
THAT PLANET OVER THERE. IT'S NOT ON ANY OF THE STAR MAPS.
WUDDA WOOBOO
YES, ESSFOR, I DO SEE THE ASTEROID FIELD. AND NO, I DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE ODDS THAT WE'LL BE KILLED BEFORE REACHING THE PLANET'S SURFACE.
I KNOW YOU'RE NEW AROUND HERE, BUT HAVE A LITTLE BIT OF FAITH, OKAY?
I'M STARTING TO GET PRETTY GOOD AT NOT DYING.

LOOKS PRETTY BARREN. SCAN FOR SIGNS OF LIFE.
BRRRP FUDDD
WELL, SCAN AGAIN. THERE HAS TO BE *SOMETHING* HERE.
THE *MOUNTAIN.* WE HAVE TO FIND THE BLUE MOUNTAIN FROM THE STORY.
THAT'S THE KEY. THERE HAS TO BE SOME SIGN OF...
OH, NO.
ESSFOR, I'M TAKING US DOWN.

NO, THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT.
THIS CAN'T BE HOW IT ENDED.


FRRMP FWWOOPP DUDD
OKAY, MAYBE I SHOULD'VE READ THE WHOLE STORY FIRST. BUT I WAS JUST ANXIOUS TO--
DUDD DUDD DWOOP
WOULD YOU STOP BEEPING FOR FIVE SECONDS SO I CAN...
WAIT, ARE YOU STILL SCANNING FOR LIFE SIGNS? WHAT ARE YOU...
I KNEW SOMEONE WOULD COME.
I KNEW SOMEDAY THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER JEDI.
UH, HI. I'M...I'M NOT EXACTLY...
I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU. I'M JUST LOOKING FOR ANSWERS.
HEH. HURT ME? HEH HEH HEH.
NO, YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME, LITTLE JEDI.
UM. UH-OH.
YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME DO WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DO FOR MANY YEARS NOW.

MY NAME IS GARRO. THE LAST OF THE ROCKHAWKERS.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME FINISH THIS WAR.

STAR WARS™
NEXT ISSUE:

Tour
THE SEVEN SEAS
With
BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
Call 555-FISH